

Structured Academic Discussion Strategy in the Read 180 *rBook* Pedagogy
(A Scripted Illustration Using a REACT Question During Shared Reading)
(Read 180 *rBook*, Stage B, Reading 1 - REACT, p. 182)

✘ Prior to Instruction:

Striving readers and English Learners need ample opportunities to engage in academic discourse. However, many are passive observers or actively off task during critical discussions, which does little to bolster reading comprehension or academic language and literacy skills. In Read 180 classrooms, every learner should be supported and held accountable for engaging in academic discussion on a daily basis. In preparation for Whole Group and Small Group Instruction, be sure to preview the lesson to identify ideal opportunities for a structured discussion. Pay attention to these 3 lesson phases as questions and tasks are deliberately provided that warrant reflection and response by all students: 1) **Anchor DVD** viewing and reviewing; 2) **REACT** questions in Shared Reading; 3) **Vocabulary Builder** explicit word instruction: questions to deepen understanding and prompt interaction.

✘ Structured Discussion Instructional Steps:

1. Clarify the discussion task expectations:

Write the discussion question(s) and sentence starter(s) on the board before the class starts. Pose the discussion question/task to the class, one that will encourage them to reflect upon their knowledge and experiences related to the reading (e.g., *What is a major turning point in a young person's life (rBook Stage B, Reading 1 - REACT, p. 182).* Clarify any potentially unfamiliar vocabulary or concepts in the question. Establish a time frame for reflection.

We have learned that a turning point is an important change or challenge in a person's life. I would like everyone to consider an example of one major turning point in a young person's life. There are certainly many possible examples. Maybe the turning point is related to parents, school, health or sports. Think quietly about one example and get ready to share in 30 seconds.

2. Structure competent student interaction (with "prepared participation"):

Direct attention to the sentence starter on the board. Clarify any potentially unfamiliar vocabulary or syntax. Model an appropriate answer using the starter. Build students' reading fluency and discussion confidence by having them repeat your model response before preparing and sharing their own. Time allowing (and ideally), direct students to write their answer completely in a notebook rather than simply reading the starter off the board and trying to append their idea. As students write, walk around to offer support where needed and monitor responses. Nominate one or two students to later "jump-start" the whole group discussion. Cue students to rehearse their ideas with partners. Ask classes with particularly weak readers to share their answer twice.

We are going to share ideas using the academic sentence starter on the board. I will go ahead and share my idea first: One major turning point that most young people face is having a really difficult teacher. Notice how I have completed the sentence beginning with a verb ending in -ing. You will need to complete the sentence beginning with a verb ending in -ing such as losing or discovering. Write your complete sentence in your notebook then read it over a few times to get ready to share with your partner. Partner one, please turn and talk. Partner two, go ahead and share now.

3. Structure active listening and response:

"Jump-start" the discussion with one or two "nominated volunteer" responses, then randomly call on a few more students before opening the discussion up to authentic volunteers. Do not allow any hand-raising or blurting during the initial phases of the discussion as you randomly call on students. Let students know that after calling on a few students randomly, you will invite voluntary contributions from individuals who had not already shared.

Record students' ideas on the board for subsequent review, and/or have students jot down one of the more (interesting, similar, surprising, etc.) contributions they heard during the discussion.

Require that students respond using a *public voice* more suitable to sharing ideas in a public forum, rather than a *private voice* more appropriate for a personal conversation. A *public voice* is three times louder and two times slower than a conversational *private voice*.

Don't interject your own ideas or steal students' thunder by repeatedly elaborating upon their ideas. Save your instructional synthesis and commentary for the discussion closure.

After several contributions, there tends to be some repetition. Require that students acknowledge similarities and differences in their responses using appropriate language strategies for classroom discussion and collaboration (e.g., *My idea builds upon ___'s idea*). This fosters active listening and validation of ideas.

Now let's hear some of your examples. While students are sharing, I will remind you to use your public voice so that everyone can hear. This is important because I would like each of you to listen carefully for one example that you consider to be a major turning point for many youths you know. I heard many fine examples as I walked around the room, but I would like to jump-start the discussion with a couple of "nominated volunteers." ____, will you please share your example. I would also like to nominate ____ to share. Let's hear from a few more of you. How about ____? ____, please share your example next. Now, we have time for two volunteers. I would like an example from both sides of the room. Thank you, ____ And how about ____

4. Synthesize contributions and make connections to the subsequent reading(s):

Record ideas on the board for subsequent review, and/or have students jot down one of the more (similar, interesting, surprising) contributions they heard during the discussion.

Complete the structured academic discussion process by validating their participation and synthesizing what you have all learned from this collective idea generation. Establish a clear connection between the generated content and the subsequent reading selection or task.

You have come up with a wide variety of examples of truly major turning points in a youth's life, ranging from ____ to _____. In this workshop, we will be reading several selections about both similar and different challenges faced by youths from different backgrounds. We will also discover how these individuals dealt with their life changing events in very productive ways.

